

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 04399 011131Z
ACTION AF-10

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CONFIDENTIAL ACCRA 4399

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: OFFSHORE FISHING

REFS: (A) STATE 090967; (B) ACCRA 3283

1. THE FOLLOWING REPLIES ARE KEYED TO THE QUESTIONS
IN REFTEL A:

A. MARINE FISHING IS AN IMPORTANT OCCUPATION OF THE
COASTAL PEOPLE OF GHANA AND FISH IS A KEY INGREDIENT
IN THE LOCAL DIET. NEARLY ALL THE MARINE CATCH, WHICH
TOTALLED 203,342 TONS IN 1975, IS CONSUMED LOCALLY AND
THE COUNTRY IS A NET IMPORTER OF FISH. GHANA HAS A HIGH-
SEAS FISHING FLEET WHICH HAS FISHED AS FAR SOUTH AS THE
WATERS OF ANGOLA. THE EXTENSION OF ANGOLA'S FISHING
BOUNDARIES HAS REPORTEDLY REDUCED GHANAIAN ACCESS TO
THESE WATERS.

B. OBSERVERS GENERALLY AGREE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL
IN CHANA FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF OFFSHORE FISHING,
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PAGE 02 ACCRA 04399 011131Z

ESPECIALLY FOR TUNA.

C. THE FISHERIES DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRI-
CULTURE IS THE GOG AGENCY PROMOTING AND REGULATING FISHING.
THE DEPARTMENT OPERATES FIVE STATIONS ALONG THE COAST FROM
WHICH ITS STAFF INSPECT FISHING VESSELS AND THEIR CATCH.
THE GHANA NAVY IS CHARGED WITH ENFORCING REGULATIONS

OFFSHORE, HOWEVER, AND IN 1976 TOOK DELIVERY OF TWO 35-METER WEST GERMAN PATROL BOATS. FOUR MORE LARGER PATROL CRAFT ARE TO ORDER FROM THE FRG; TWO FOR DELIVERY THIS YEAR AND TWO IN 1979. TWO U.S. FIRMS ARE ENGAGED IN TUNA FISHING OPERATIONS BASED IN THE PORT OF TEMA. THE TUNA, CAUGHT PRIMARILY BY CHARTERED BOATS FISHING IN WEST AFRICAN WATERS, ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, EXPORTED TO U.S. CANNERIES. THE NEW GOG POLICY REQUIRES FOREIGNERS WISHING TO FISH IN GHANA'S WATERS TO FORM JOINT VENTURES WHICH MUST BE CONTROLLED BY GHANAIANS.

D. ACCORDING TO THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES, IVORY COAST VESSELS ARE OFTEN OBSERVED IN UNAUTHORIZED FISHING OFF WESTERN GHANA, BUT THEY ARE SELDOM APPREHENDED. THE GOG REPORTEDLY TRIES TO DISCOURAGE IVORIAN POACHING THROUGH THE GHANA-IVORY COAST JOINT FISHING COMMISSION. ACCORDING TO AN INFORMED PRIVATE SOURCE, SOVIET FISHING VESSELS OFTEN FISH IN GHANAIAN WATERS. APPARENTLY THE GOG IS UNAWARE OF SOVIET VIOLATIONS OR CHOOSES TO IGNORE THEM, PROBABLY THE LATTER.

E. THE IVORY COAST WAS THE ONLY NATION MENTIONED AS POACHING TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT.

F. GHANA CLAIMS HER TERRITORIAL WATERS EXTEND 200 MILES.

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PAGE 03 ACCRA 04399 011131Z

G. WE UNDERSTAND THERE HAVE BEEN FEW SEIZURES OF UN-AUTHORIZED FOREIGN VESSELS FOR FISHING IN GHANAIAN WATERS. ACCORDING TO FISHERIES OFFICIALS, THE FEW IVORIAN BOATS CAUGHT HAVE BEEN RELEASED WITHOUT ANY PUNISHMENT. THUS, THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN GHANA.

2. GHANA WOULD LIKELY FAVOR COOPERATIVE POLICING OF OFFSHORE FISHING. GHANA IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON EAST-CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERIES, CECAF, OF FAO WHICH INCLUDES COUNTRIES FROM SENEGAL TO THE CONGO. WE UNDERSTAND THIS COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS ON REGULATING FISHING TO ITS MEMBERS AND COULD BE A FORUM THROUGH WHICH JOINT POLICING OF FISHING MIGHT BE ORGANIZED.

SMITH

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